

The Twenty Third Psalm  
(Study # 12)

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Introduction

1. Verse 6:

- (1) The final words of the twenty third psalm:
- (2) "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

2. A brief reminiscence:

- (1) Some of the earlier descriptions of the twenty third psalm included the following:
- (2) The sweetest little song that ever sounded on this earth.
- (3) The lullaby of the Good Shepherd.
- (4) The nightingale of the Psalms.
- (5) The lilting grace notes of love.
- (6) A divinely-appointed minstrel.
- (7) The Psalm of the cross.
- (8) A staff upon which to lean.
- (9) A shaded bower on a steep hill.
- (10) An oasis in a waterless desert.
- (11) A harbor in the time of storms.
- (12) A quiet nook for meditation.
- (13) A secret place of the heart.
- (14) A sacred room in the temple of scriptures.
- (15) A Holy of Holies in the heart of the universe.

3. Evidences of David's personal condition:

- (1) Deduced from Psalm 23, as follow:
- (2) He was relaxed and calm.
- (3) His thoughts were happy and unburdened.
- (4) No indications of stress or anxiety.

- (5) No sense of pressing needs.
- (6) The delight of his heart to be in God's presence.
- (7) His memories of his estrangements from God.
- (8) His thanksgiving for forgiveness and restoration.
- (9) His solace in the presence of his never-departing companions: goodness and mercy.
- (10) His anticipation of eternal life.

4. A bird's-eye view of Psalm 23:

- (1) The highest reality: "The Lord." (v-1)
- (2) The dearest possession: "The Lord is my shepherd." (v-1)
- (3) The perfect contentment: "I shall not want." (v-1)
- (4) The positive persuasion: "He maketh me to lie down." (v-2)
- (5) The most faithful guide: "He leadeth me." (v-2)
- (6) The Great Physician: "He restoreth my soul." (v-3)
- (7) The inevitable journey: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." (v-4)
- (8) The contagious courage: "I will fear no evil." (v-4)
- (9) The sacred presence: "Thou art with me." (v-4)
- (10) The quaint source of comfort: "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." (v-4)
- (11) The bountiful provision: "Thou preparest a table before me." (v-5)
- (12) The supreme approval: "Thou anointest my head with oil." (v-5)
- (13) The spiritual overflow: "My cup runneth over." (v-5)
- (14) The permanent companions: "Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." (v-6)
- (15) The eternal home of the soul: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." (v-6)

## I. Permanent Address

1. "The house of the Lord for ever!"
2. The longing for permanence:
  - (1) The longing for permanence is in all people, all climes, and all religions.
  - (2) A biblical example: "An inheritance that fadeth not away."  
(I Pet. 1:4)
  - (3) The ancient pagans dreamed and wrote about a mystical flower, the amaranth.
  - (4) The amaranth represented their longing for a flower that would never fade.
  - (5) In the heat of summer, or the cold of winter: One flower that would never fade!
  - (6) Peter picked up on this, as he wrote: "Our inheritance is an amaranth, a flower that will never fade."
  - (7) Or: "The land where the rose petals never fall."
3. Our cry for permanence is our response to:
  - (1) The passing years.
  - (2) The changing seasons.
  - (3) The withering grass.
  - (4) The fading flowers.
  - (5) The falling leaves.
  - (6) Our decaying bodies.
  - (7) The death of our loved ones.
4. In this verse:
  - (1) The cry for permanence is answered.
  - (2) The unending stream that flows through our lives falls into the fathomless ocean of eternity.
  - (3) The melody of eternity breaks on the shores of time, and whispers: "Ever with the Lord." (I Thess. 4:17)

- (4) With these same longings stirring in his heart, David cried:  
"The house of the Lord for ever!"
- (5) Or: Permanent address!

5. Our impermanent addresses:

- (1) 1208 West Eighth.
- (2) 210 Church Street.
- (3) 700 East Gholston.
- (4) 2740 Lindsey Drive.
- (5) 511 East Browning.
- (6) 4102 South Hughes.
- (8) 801 South Avenue D.
- (9) 904 Hancock Street.
- (10) Route 2, Box 221-A

6. But, someday:

- (1) Permanent address!
- (2) "The house of the Lord for ever!"

7. This verse confidently declares:

- (1) The changes of this life are fitting us for the changeless life of eternity.
- (2) Time is our robing room for eternity.
- (3) Earth is our training house for heaven.
- (4) One day our last lesson will be learned.
- (5) The master's school bell shall ring for the final time.

8. Then:

- (1) Permanent address!
- (2) "The house of the Lord for ever!"
- (3) "Ever with the Lord!"

9. All of our impermanent addresses on this earth have been dear to us, and are remembered with joy.
10. But none has been as dear as our divinely-promised permanent address in eternity.

## II. Heaven Is Home

### 1. Companion verses:

- (1) David: "The house of the Lord for ever." (Psa. 23:6)
- (2) Jesus: "In my Father's house are many mansions."  
(John 14:2)

### 2. The magic of home:

- (1) Home will draw the wanderer from the ends of the earth.
- (2) Memories of home will nerve the soldier to heroic endurance.
- (3) Thoughts of home will melt the heart of the hardened criminal.
- (4) Fathers will callous their hands in strenuous toil to keep their homes together.
- (5) Mothers will uncomplainingly become charwomen to keep their homes together.

### 3. What makes home so dear?

- (1) Not the location.
- (2) Not the intricate blueprint.
- (3) Not the architectural expertise.
- (4) Not the brick, mortar, or lumber.
- (5) Not the elaborate furniture.
- (6) Not the excessive amount of money spent on construction.
- (7) Not the winding lanes where happy childhood once frolicked and played.

4. But, rather:

- (1) The loved ones who once occupied our homes.
- (2) Tennyson put it this way:  
"And the stately ships go out  
To their haven under the hill;  
But O for the touch of a vanquished hand  
And the sound of a voice that is still."

5. Revelation 21:1-27

- (1) Heaven is home!
- (2) "That great city."
- (3) The New Jerusalem."
- (4) "Twelve foundations of precious stones."
- (5) "Four walls of Jasper."
- (6) "Twelve gates of pearl."
- (7) "Streets of gold."
- (8) "Coming down from God out of heaven."
- (9) "As a bride adorned for her husband."
- (10) "The Lamb is the light thereof."
- (11) "No more sorrow."
- (12) "No more crying."
- (13) "No more tears."
- (14) "No more pain."
- (15) "No more night."
- (16) "No more sin."
- (17) "No more death."
- (18) Forever in God's presence.
- (19) Forever with loved ones gone before.
- (20) Forever to see and know them again.
- (21) There where parting is no more.

6. A page from the past:

- (1) Ancient vessels sailing from foreign ports, until they crossed the line, toasted: "Friends behind."

- (2) After they crossed the line, they toasted: "Friends before."
- (3) Those who watched the ships depart the foreign ports, said: "There they go."
- (4) Those who waited for them in the home ports, said: "Here they come."

7. The spiritual application:

- (1) As our loved ones and friends depart into the valley of the shadow of death, we softly say: "There they go."
- (2) But over in the home port of heaven our loved ones, friends, angels and seraphim triumphantly cry: "Here they come!"

8. Then: "The house of the Lord for ever!"

### III. Heaven: The Present Tense

1. Two widespread views of heaven:

- (1) Heaven is a hope of the future.
- (2) Heaven is a possession of the present.

2. Some words of the psalmists:

- (1) "Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and carries the truth in his heart." (Psa. 15:1-2)
- (2) "One thing have I desired of the Lord; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life." (Psa. 27:4)
- (3) "Blessed is the man whom thou callest to come nigh unto thee: He shall dwell in thy courts and be satisfied with the goodness of thy house." (Psa. 65:4)
- (4) "I was glad when they said unto me: Let us go into the house of the Lord." (Psa. 122:1)
- (5) And, finally, David's triumphant cry: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever!" (Psa. 23:6)

3. Two towering truths:
  - (1) Heaven does not begin with our arrival there.
  - (2) Heaven begins when we wash our robes in the blood of the Lamb.
  - (3) Heaven is not only a hope of the future.
  - (4) Heaven may also be a possession of the present.
4. It is inexpressibly wonderful that in the future we shall dwell in the eternal house of the Lord.
5. It is also inexpressibly wonderful that we may lay hold upon heaven as a present possession.

#### IV. Heaven: The Future Tense

1. There are various levels of life:
  - (1) The level of the society around us.
  - (2) The level of doing what others are doing.
  - (3) The level of our physical appetites.
  - (4) The level of intellect, logic, reason.
  - (5) The level of emotionalism.
  - (6) The level of being all things to all men.
  - (7) The level of satisfaction with mediocrity.
  - (8) The level of the religion we profess.
  - (9) The level of the church to which we belong.
  - (10) The heavenly level: Our standing in Christ.
2. The most important question: What is the level of your life, and of mine?
3. Faith must do two things:
  - (1) It must claim a position based on the promises of God.
  - (2) It must claim God's power to make that position a reality.

4. Such a life will:
  - (1) Shape itself into a psalm.
  - (2) Begin with the melody of the shepherd's care for the sheep.
  - (3) Soar to sing at the gates of the eternal fold.
  - (4) End in the home circle beyond the valley of the shadow of death.
  
5. And throughout the unending reaches of eternity, that life shall ceaselessly sing: "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

### Conclusion

1. We have now arrived at the end of the sweetest little song that ever sounded on this earth.
2. The soothing lullaby of the shepherd will cease for awhile.
3. The grace notes of the shepherd's love will sound no more for awhile.
4. The nightingale of the Psalms will sing no more for awhile.
5. In an earlier study, I said that the twenty third psalm was a divinely-commissioned minstrel to go over the earth singing the song of the Good Shepherd's love.
6. For more than 3000 years, it has remanded to their dungeons more burdens, doubts, and sorrows than there are sands upon the shores of the seven seas.
7. It has visited, comforted, consoled, strengthened, rescued, and encouraged more hearts and souls than there are stars in the canopy of God's heaven.
8. And, still, its work is not done.

9. It shall go on singing through all ages and eons, and shall never fold its wings until the last pilgrim is safe and time is no more.
10. It shall then fly back to the heart of God from whence it came and, commingled with the celestial sounds of eternity, shall sing on and on forever, and forever, and forever.

*End*



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